

SHIFTING GEARS

THE CHANGING MEANING OF WORK IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1920-1980

GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

INTERVIEWEE: RICHARD GREENWOOD

INTERVIEWER: MARTHA NORKUNAS

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TRANSCRIBER: Linda DeLisle

MN: Today is July 21, 1988,

RG: Yup.

MN: And, I'm here with Richard Greenwood on Fairlawn Ave. What I often do with people who worked at the factory, at Heywood Wakefield, is ask them how their families arrived in Gardner, But your case is different, obviously. So I thought maybe you could tell me about your family's involvement with the company?

RG: Well, I'm a descendant of the oldest of the five brothers who founded Heywood Wakefield. So my family's been in Gardner since the 1700's, and Levi Heywood was the oldest of the five brothers. Along with his brothers he started a chair business on Pearl St. in a barn. And, as time went on he was the survivor, so we say, the one that continued to push to have a business. This information is readily available in a book called "The First Hundred Years" or "A completed Century" which was written by my grandfather, Levi Heywood Greenwood. So you can get all that history without my giving it to you now.

MN: In a way what I'm interested in is what you would have known growing up about your family. Your personal knowledge about your family.

RG: Okey, well, I never knew Levi Heywood because he died a long time ago, and his daughter. . .

MN: But you would have known of him. Now this was something your family talked about?

RG: Oh yes, oh yes. And also his son-in-law who would be my grandfather, no, wait a minute, his son-in-law was my great grandfather. His son-in-law was Alvin N. Greenwood and he was a partner in Heywood Wakefield as well. He married Levi's daughter. They had a son, Levi Heywood Greenwood. Okey, that's my father's father. My Grandfather, Levi Heywood Greenwood among other things was a journalist, he was the President of Heywood Wakefield for a number of years, he owned the Gardner News at one time, he traveled extensively.

MN: This is your grandfather?

RG: This is my grandfather, okey? And, he was in the Massachusetts State Senate, was president of the Senate in 1913. When he got involved in Heywood Wakefield, it was because it looked like the company needed some direction and he was a majority or substantial stock holder, so he got back into the management of Heywood Wakefield Company. And, he was the President of the company up until 1929. In 1929 he became seriously ill, and the board of directors had to pick a successor, and there were two people from whom they could chose: one was Seth Heywood, and one was my father. Seth Heywood was a descendant of the, probably the youngest of the wife Heywood Brothers and he had been working at the company as my father had, my father had been there maybe nine or ten years when he got elected president of the company. So my father was the President of the company from 1929 until his retirement in 1966.

MN: And what had your father done prior to becoming president of the company?

RG: Well, he worked at the plant in Wakefield. He was in management positions. He started in Wakefield where there was a branch plant. The Wakefield plant was actually the Wakefield Rattan Company founded by Cyrus Wakefield which Heywood Brothers bought out. For a number of years it was Heywood Brothers and Wakefield Company. Then in 1929, 1921, they had a corporate re-organization and they dropped the Brothers and this became Heywood Wakefield Company. Also, during that, the late 1800's and up until 1921, they acquired some other businesses. They bought out the, a plant out in Erving Washburn Company.

MN: Erving Massachusetts?

RG: Yes, Erving MA. They bought the Lloyd Manufacturing Company in Michigan. In the Washburn, Erving situation they closed those plants and just picked up the line of goods that that company made.

MN: Which was what?

RG: Basically, railroad car seats and school furniture and stuff like that. These are recollections of mine now. Not gospel facts, okey.

MN: That's all I want. I mean you don't have to worry that it's written on stone because. .

RG: You can, you can, easily corroborate this information by reaching into the archives a little bit.

MN: And also, because I'm curious you had written in your note, that the company was, news of the company was a daily event in your house.

RG: Well, it was.

MN: So, that's what I want to know. What you as a person would have known growing up here?

RG: Well, what I'm telling you came from the mouths of my ancestors, okey? This is my grandmother speaking or my father speaking or an uncle or anybody who was connected with the company.

MN: So when they got together, like after work at the house, would the company be a topic?

RG: Well, the company would be a topic oftentimes in the house principally because my father being the president of the company would often have some of his people there. They would socialize together. They would talk about business together.

MN: Oh, the people that he worked with.

RG: Oh, ya, I mean, you know the top management team your vice president, your general sales manager, your plant manager, certain directors and so forth, treasurer of the company. They would often come for dinner or to our house in Plymouth for the weekend. And you know it was a time for comradery and relaxation as anybody would invite somebody for dinner or the weekend or whatever. But business was always discussed. Because you do, it was their life. My father's whole life was that company and the people who worked there. It was a, that was an era that I really missed, when business was run like a family. And I am going to digress here from, but you're going to pick it off the tape and do what you want with it. But I can tell you that my father's heart and soul was in that company. And if you talk to the old timers they will, I think to a man, say what a wonderful man my father was, and how friendly he was, and so forth.

MN: He was very well thought of.

RG: Ya. He had the facility to know people and remember people's names, He would walk through that plant and he would be able to call everybody by name. And he would say, "how is your brother, the one that fell down the stairs and broke his head" or whatever. He would remember all of these things. And, he was very much a part of their daily activity. When the company began to get into some troubles in the late 50's and 60's he was less involved on a day-to-day basis with all of the employees. But you go back into the 30's and 40's when he was a younger man and when he was struggling to bring the company out of the depression and so forth. If you'll ever get to see any pictures and so forth you will see him playing ball, softball, you will see him at the corn roast, he was with the people. He would be out in the shop with the people. When they were putting in the conveyors, modernizing the factory, putting in the overhead conveyors at the Palmer B Compant, putting in all the new spray ovens and spray booths and drying ovens and so forth. He was out there all the time. I remember in 1938, when we had the hurricaine and he was down at the plant through the whole storm. I mean, we were home all alone. He'd come home to change his clothes, then he'd go back down there again because Crystal Lake was flooding through the basement of the shop and stock was floating all over

RG: (con't) the place. You know, and he'd come home and he'd grab something to eat and he'd tell us what was going on then he'd go back down the factory again. Everyday that I woke up I could hear the garage door, I could hear his car, he had an old packard touring car, when I was just a little guy, and I could hear him shifting the gears as he went to work. And, he always was at work by quarter of seven in the morning. He was always there almost before a lot of the employees, most of the employees, okey, and people used to tell me, and I know this for a fact, that his door was always open, you could always go, he took the door right off his office, there was never a door on his office, and the old office building, before they modernized it in 1948, there was no door on his office, he had it removed. So that people could feel free to come in and talk with him. And many employees would come in pour out his heart and soul out about a problem at home or a problem he was having in the workplace and so forth. I know that another thing, that we did, that he did, is they made every effort to keep people working, even when somebody got to the point . . I remember a man by the name of Ed Flanagan, and Ed, Ed was of the old school. He came over from Ireland, and he came to Gardner, and he went to work at Heywood Wakefield, I'm not so sure whether his wife worked there or not, and when Ed got to the point where he was, you know, ready to be put out to pasture in anybody else's business, they found something else for him to do. And, a lot of people fit that category, there were a lot of old people working at Heywood Wakefield long after their productive years were gone. They'd well, you know, why don't we let him be the watchman at the back gate, you know, and so forth. He made a great effort and the company made a great effort to keep people on the payroll and not just dump them. Of course that's costly to do. And when things got tight and they had to call in, they called in the efficiency experts and all this kind of stuff trying to save money a lot of those people just were gone.

MN: Oh, so that would have been a change in the flavor of the company when these efficiency people came in.

RG: Exactly, Exactly.

MN: How did your father feel about that?

RG: Well it was, you know when your back is against the wall it's a very tough thing to do. My father was very emotionally involved with the company. I remember, I remember probably when I was somewhere between nine and eleven, or fourteen years old, my father coming home one day and he obviously was very, very distressed. And he knew that I played with the sons of this man, and he told me, "I had to fire blank blank today." And I said "why dad?" and he said, "because he stole from the company" and I said, "how did he steal from the company?" and he said, "well,

RG: (con't) he sent something , something was sent out to be repaired for one of the people that works at the company,, and that person paid the company, or paid blank blank for the work that was done." or maybe it was like having an electric motor repaired at the shop where we would get all of our motors fixed or something like that. Often times people would do that because they could get it cheaper or they didn't know where to go so they would bring it into the foreman or the superintendent and he'd say, "well, gee, ya know I have this big problem" and "Oh, we'll get that fixed for you" You know, but they were expected to pay whatever the company had to pay for it. Well in this case the man pocketed the money and did not turn it over to the company. The company paid the bill to have the repair done and the man pocketed the money. So literally he stole from the company. And you know, you just can't tolerate that.

MN: He obviously knew what he was doing?

RG: Oh, ya. He knew he was doing it and I know that something, that weighed on his mind for weeks. Just bothered the hell out of him that he had to do that, ya know. And ah, I know that when he left the company, and that's another story, he sought permission from the people who took over Heywood Wakefield when he retired, he asked if he could go around and shake hands with all the employees. And he went around, not only this plant, but all the other plants, and said goodbye, and thanked them for all that they had done during the time that he was there. See a company was quite spread out when the depression hit. They had offices in Boston, the general offices were in Boston, they had the plant in Wakefield, they had a plant in Gardner.

MN: So Gardner wasn't the Corporate headquarters initially?

RG: No, Corporate office was at 174 Portland Street in Boaton. And it was called the executive office. And that's where the vice president and the treasurer and the president and that entourage was there. And the communications went from all the places. I mean, they had a plant in Los Angeles, they had a Chicago warehouse, they had a Baltimore warehouse, they had a plant in Summerville, they had one in Wakefield, they had one in Gardner, and so forth. Had one in Canada. So it was like a General Motors type of thing with an executive office. Well, when things went bad in the depression, my father and the Board of Directors obviously, determined that they would serve the purpose best if they got the offices up to Gardner. So they closed the executive offices in Boston.

MN: For any reason did they chose Gardner rather than one of the other places?

RG: Well, Gardner was the biggest factory, had the biggest buildings and the office and so forth, that's where the origins were, so thats why it made sense. At that time, from a personal standpoint, we were then living in my father's, my grandfathers house in Plymouth, which my father bought from his mother after my grandfather died. The

RG: (con't) house here in Gardner, which is where the American Legion is now was Levi Heywood's own place, had been sold at my grandfather's death. So when my father was going to come back up and the news reached Gardner that it was coming, the executive office was coming up, the real estate man got a call from my father and said I need to have a house. I'm going to be moving my family up to Gardner, and I, within the last two years threw away the letter from the real estate man to my father that said that the old home place was back on the market. It had been out of the family for about five years. So we moved back into what was the original family (want some of this? (offers cream for the coffee) home place on the corner of Elm Street where the American Legion is now. That was a huge mansion and grounds and so forth.

MN: Was that important that you should move back to the family house?

RG: Well, I think that it is. I think, I think in those days the way, Jen will you bring a spoon please, I think that was the way it went in those days. If you look at the way all these mills operated in Gardner, somebody with the foresight, the endurance, the entrepreneurship and the backing whether it was their own money or they had friends or family that donated money to start a company, started a company. I mean, you had P. Derby and Sons, you had Nichols and Stone, you have S. Bent and so forth. That's the way all these people started. In those days whatever, when they made money, they made a lot of money because they didn't pay any taxes. Nobody paid taxes. So what could they do with their money? They built themselves a hell of a big house someplace. I mean if you look at the, what the buildings that are still on Central Street, and you look at where the nuns live, that was a Heywood house, you look across the street, there's another one where Dr. Martel has his offices and so forth. There's another one that was torn down. I mean you got to just look at some old pictures and all of these mill owners had all their big houses up on the highest hills and so forth. I like to think that for the most part Levi Heywood and his descendants or his brothers descendants did a lot for the community. I think they made money here,, but they did a lot of other things. They provided, excuse me (sips coffee) they provided employment to literally thousands of people. They also put back into the community in the form of contributions land, buildings and so forth. Levi Heywood gave the land for the High School. The original High School on Chestnut St. Alvin Greenwood and Helen Heywood who were Livi's daughter and son-in-law gave the library, okey. My grandfather gave the Greenwood Memorial Pool. Henry Heywood, s widow gave the hospital, alright. So yes, they as mill owners, they all made a potful of money but they gave it back to the people in the form of, of either land that became a park or a hospital or a library or whatever.

MN: Was this a feeling of responsibility? Social responsibility. They had to do this in a way?

RG: Oh yeah, heah. Well, I don't know if they felt they have to do it. I can assure you, that until I no longer live in Gardner, I will be on the Board of Trustees of both the pool and the Library because I feel it's my duty to do so. My family gave those institutions to the city and I feel obligated to serve them. And this, you know it's a big part of my life, other than business and family. You know I'm in contact with the Library almost on a daily basis. The pool runs a little differently because it's a different type of an institution. But, I recently had the sign redone down at the Greenwood pool. You are the first person that knows it. But I had the sign taken down and taken to a sign shop and had it redone because I know the city isn't going to do it. And ah, because it's just a, it's a terrible expense for what you got. I mean the money. If the city is going to spend the money they would spend it in seventeen other directions. But I just feel that the family's name and what was meant to be there ought to lookright. So thats why I did it, you know. But I think that whats happened here in Gardner and whats happened inthis country is we've gotten away from that sort of a employer employee relationship. The world war, the second world war I think, had a lot to do with that because people went off and into the service and I think they came back with a whole different attititude about what they expected out of life in general, for themselves and for their children. I been, I've seen both sides of it, so I can't , my observation would be that although they were paid less and they worked long hours and all that kind of stuff, I think people were better off 35 years ago, 40 years ago, than they are today. You've got more crime,, you got more people who think they're entitled to everything without working for it. You have no respect anymore for older people and authority. I mean, you have a nation of have nots wanting what the haves have without working for it. And you have just a total disregard, and I think it came from World War Two. I just think you've got all these people that were over there fighting and they're saying, my god damm kit isn't going to have to go through this. And they went home and they gave them everything. And a lot of them made a lot of money during the was couldn't spend it on anything, so they came home and they started spending it. And, I think you make a false economy. I think when you, when you tell people that only five dollars down gets you this, you're secuding them into a system of buying. . . If you took away all the automobiles that were out on the streets today and all the VCR's and everything else until they were paid for, theworld would come to a standstill. The other side of the coin is, well look at all the employment we're making. But now you got a point where you're lucky to buy a tape recorder that works, and works for a good long time. You go out and you buy. .I replaced my dishwasher after twenty years of service. Well you don't usually get twenty years out of a dishwasher, but I

RG: (con't) happen to be a mechanical type of guy so when something goes wrong I fix it. So I can make stuff last a lot longer than the average person. But I noticed in just changing that dishwasher, I can go around with a micrometer and I can tell you the metal is thinner here and this you can see all the things that they did, not to cheat but to keep the cost down because everything costs so much now. You know if you didn't grow up when . . . you know I went to work for Heywood Wakefield, it was \$40.00 a week. The People you've been talking to went there for \$8 a week, okay, and at \$40 a week I got along just fine. I paid five bucks a week for my room, and the rest of it was, you know, whatever. I mean you didn't throw it around but you had, I had enough to get by.

MN: What was the difference then in the work ethics before and after the war? That would have changed the workplace at Heywood Wakefield?

RG: (eats a cookie) I think the work effort in 1950 is a hell of a lot better than it is today. There is just a funny attitude today. There's still plenty of people that work hard. But I'll tell you right now I'd rather hire somebody that is 45 years old than 25, any day of the week. Cause those people had to learn how to work. If you came up through the depression, even if you weren't terribly affected by it, because you had affluence in your family, you still knew about it, and you still knew it was a big problem, and there were certain things you didn't do, even though there were things, I mean if you had people standing on the sidewalk with apples, you might be inside having hamburger, and the wealthy people might be having steak. But you, everybody was affected by that depression, so you had a respect for it. Maybe the Duponts or the Vanderbuilts didn't worry about it much, but and that's the case any time there's a recession, any kind of a financial problem, they got so damn much money, and so damn many locations, that if they lose a paper loss of profit somewhere on, on ah some stock they got well, they've got something else over here that makes up the slack. If you ah, if you're an average person with a family income of, today let's say \$30,000 dollars, husband or wife working and so forth, and you lose a job, that's a hell of a, that's a big problem. If you're an extremely wealthy person, and you lost 20 grand on your stock, it hasn't probably affected you, your life-style much. Maybe you don't get a new boat this year, you know?

MN: Yeah. But, would your father, I don't want to, I'm not just gonna concentrate on your father, but just in the beginning,

RG: Hmm.

MN: Would he have noticed the difference in the workers?

RG: Oh yeah, oh yeah...I could tell ya,, that, when they got into labor troubles, I think a union is a good thing if you have a situation where there's a sweatshop being run. And people are being trodden on.

RG: (con't) and, you have no voice, and life is miserable and so forth, but, I, I also think that any time you go on a job, yeah, I'll have a touch more of the (his daughter pours him some coffee). Any time you walk into a job, you walk in the door to go to work someplace, the door swings both ways. If you don't like working there, you should go somewhere else. Now, somebody might say, "Well that's easy for you to say" I'm saying given the, given the fact that there may be other jobs available, if there's no other job available then you don't have any choice. I mean lot of times we don't have choices about what we do in this world, ya know? But I, I, I'm personally sick of the person who bitches about where he works without making any effort to improve it. And I think that you have to understand a little bit. I always tried to tell the people that I worked with that any business, the business has to make money to satisfy the stockholders who invest and, and to add money to put back into the business. And the employee has to be paid fairly for the amount of work that he does. And any time that any one of those gets out of whack, you got a problem. So, let's say that you've got a union making terrible demands, and it exceeds the profitability of the company, what's gonna pay for it? At some point in time the company's just gonna have to say "We can't do it, okay?" If you're making widgets, and you can only make so many widgets in this facility, and you can only sell them for such and such a price because there's a million other widget manufacturers and their costs are lower, that's one of the problems in the furniture business is that furniture that's imported, or furniture that's ah made down south doesn't carry the same cost as furniture up here does. Okay. First of all, the TVA which you and I and the rest of the tax payers pay for provides low cost power for the Tennessee Valley, let's say, alright. The people that work in Tennessee they get on off, they get them off the mountain, and they come into town and they're making more money than they ever did in their life. But it isn't a descent wage to people up here, and they're cross at the same, because all they got to have is a bottle of moonshine in a car, and bare feet, and peanut butter okay?

MN: Is the quality the same?

RG: The quality can be the same, and has been the same. I've seen it. I mean people will do what you train them to do . . . If you hire a fourteen year old to cut your grass and you show him how to do it and how to run the mower, and you keep schooling him, he cuts the grass pretty well. If you, if you can hire a ten year old to do that, but if you don't train him their not, okay? Ah, I, I, I know that we had a plant in Tennessee that we used to make school furniture in, and, and, ah, I considered it to be a pretty well run organization. I thought the quality level was good and so forth, the people were grateful to have a job, they were learning, they were upgrading standard of living and so forth. And we were, we were, we became competitive. We're the other people in the market place. You cannot sell a product that's overpriced. I somebody else is making that product cheaper, no matter how they do it, they're gonna do it. We're such a price conscious nation if you, if somebody calls me up

RG: (con't) my business is locks and alarms, more alarms than locks, but if you call me up and say the back door lock doesn't work and I need a new one how much are they? I'll say well we got two choices, I have one for \$29, I got one for \$65. Oh my God, I can go to Richs and buy one for \$14. That's the place to go. Because if I got that \$14 lock, and I came up and charged you to put it on your door and it quits in 6 months, your gonna be mad as hell. But if you buy it, and you put it on, and that quits, you can say "well I only paid \$14 for it" Okey, so it's a vicious cycle. So you go into a store, and there's furniture. And you sit down in a chair, and this thing is \$79.50, and you sit down in another chair and it's \$58.20, cause you want to save the \$21 bucks. Okey, well, maybe the more expensive one is made by Heywood Wakefield, because they, and their costs are higher in order to make the three bucks or four bucks or whatever they gotta make on that chair, they've got to have a higher price. Now I know, I know that one of the problems that the big company had, I was involved with plant engineering, maintenance, insurance, and things like that, okey, and I found that any time an inspector came in whether it was OSHA, or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the fire department, or anybody, they come to Gardner, they zero in on Heywood Wakefield. This is the biggest place. Okey. They would come in and every, every year I'd see somebody new. Every six months I'd see somebody new. You got to do this, you got to do that, and so forth. With no regard as to what it was costing anybody. You've just got to do all these things. Well you know because of my, the fact that I was a call fire-fighter for 33 years in this town, and because of my business, I've been in all the other places. I've been in every factory in this town, and I know that they don't comply, or didn't comply with 10% of what we were having to do. So their costs of operation were much lower, and are much lower. Some of em have been caught up with. But I can take you to a plant in this town where they asked me to quote them on putting locks on the outside doors. And, I quoted on a lock that would meet the exit code. The door would be locked so you couldn't come in, but you could always get out in case of fire. Well they, they had a competitive price, and the guy was gonna put on dead bolts. So now when you go, you run to go out the door theres a door knob and a bolt. The law specifically prohibits that. And I said "I won't quote on that". The other guy got the job, and that factory, right in Gardner now, if you had a fire and the lights went out, you would have people piled up against the door because they got to God Damn many knobs to turn to get out.

MN: Yeah, people don't want me to walk through the factories with the video camera.

RG: Course they don't, course they don't, okey. You can walk through the factory I worked at . . . any time you want. And I've been in some bad situations. There was a factory down in south Gardner, we went into one time on a fire, and they had an open hole in the floor that they were using with a, they had an electric hoist.

RG: (con't) Well you know what an elevator is, it's an enclosed shaft with a car that goes up, with gates that lock and everything. You can't fall in, you can't fall out, alright. These people were lowering stuff from one floor to another with an electric chain hoist through a hole in the floor with no railing around it. Now what if a fireman going in there at night, trying to find out where the fire was, or even an employee, if the lights went out. . . .I mean they would have been killed, they would have been killed. No inspector ever went in there. I would get down. . . inspectors would come into Heywood Wakefield, and they would come take me to an elevator and they'd say, see this gate

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

RG: This mash on this gate has got to be smaller. The law says you cannot have a gate that's got a bigger, than a two inch ball would go through. Well maybe it was a thousand to fix that, or three thousand dollars to fix that. So you put it on your list of things to do, and you try to take care of it. And the whole system was like that.

MN: Well wasn't there a certain amount of anger that they would have constantly picked on Heywood Wakefield?

RG: Oh sure, but what are you gonna do about it? You see the problem is that the inspector that comes in has the book with him. And he can open it up and see that's the law, and if you don't fix it, I'm gonna close you down. You read recently about the Greenwood Pool in the Gardner News. They gonna call it a bathing beach now. Okay. Our, our inspector a health inspector only been on the job about a year and a half. Didn't know what to do about swimming pools. So he calls up the state health inspector who comes up from Rutland. And he says what have you got for community type pools? Well we got the Greenwood Pool here, we got a couple of pools up in Ridgewood Arms. Ahm, shall we go up and look at the other pool now, and the inspector says, Naw, you got enough to do over over here. So what did he do? He did the same thing again. He came to the largest place, wrote a book about this long about all the things that were wrong, and ignored the rest of it, okay? Now I don't know what kind of condition the other pools were in. But we got socked. It's the same thing repeated. So, fortunately the Board of Health has got a little more wisdom than, than to read the Riot Act and so forth. They said, well, well ya know, that place has been there since 1915. We're trying to make improvements all the time and so forth. To close it now would be a terrible hardship and so forth. So they said, look, we can interpret this as a bathing beach, which was what I said when I got involved with it. That's what they gonna do, so you don't have to do all these things. The inside pool was up to snuff. Now, we have letters on the side of the inside pool that say ah, ah, what the depth of the water is. Well, they've decided now they want it on

RG: the deck so you can look at it that way. So alright, fine. We didn't know that. Nobody sent us any regulations that say you gotta do this sort of thing. So we're going around painting lines on the floor. Whatever you want we'll do! But you can't rebuild, you can't reinvent the wheel. But that's what happened at Heywood Wakefield, every damn year.

MN: Was that a class kind of concern? I mean do they, was there a certain resentment because the Heywood's were upper class?

RG: Well, I, I don't know. I, I don't think it was, I don't think it was that. I know the inspectors think it was that. I, I think that by the time that I had inspectors coming in, looking around, and so forth, there was more that it was a big company, and they got plenty of money. They can take care of these things.

MN: I think, excuse me,

RG: Go ahead!

MN: it might just be because of the um, sort of the (?) ethics that the harder you work, the more that is expected of you. And so, um, their gonna always run to that person for a problem or for, for any, you know, looking for the bad or the good side of it. It's just gonna, you know, why bother with the little guys? Why not just go right to the (?)

RG: Well I think that they also think that probably, if if the word gets out that the inspectors or Heywood Wakefield, that the little guy will get scared and do something too. But you know, I'd say, why don't you go down to XYZ Company and do them? Oh, geez they wouldn't be able to afford to do this. Hey, does that make sense? It doesn't make sense to me. I told those inspectors more than one time, why don't you go to this company, this company, this company? Because I'll tell you right now, I, I could tell you whether a doors locked, you can't get out. I can tell you where there's no light on the stairs, and so forth. (phone rings) And I can tell you to answer the phone. (laughs) So any way, we're getting off all over Robin Hood's barn, but I'm trying just to give you a little flavor.... I remember in the in the sixties where the demands of the Union got to the point where the company just could not respond.

NOT
SURE
WHAT
PERSON
IS SPEAKING

MN: Maybe you could step back a little bit for me though.

RG: Okay.

MN: Can you tell me why the employees felt the need for a Union? When it, when it started to come in to the company?

RG: Well I, that's before my time, there okay? You're talking the thirties. I have a certain feeling and understanding about it, I'll tell you this. That, as far as Unions are concerned, you gotta understand that the union people make money. That's their job, okay? And, every time that a contract comes up, if you're paying Union dues, you want to get something for that, okay? You don't want the ____ (?) I mean, if the Unions charging you five bucks a month, or whatever their taking out of your pay for union dues, comes time for, ah the contract is up, you want that guy to go out there and get you the world. After all you paid him five bucks a month for a year, okay? And if the guys gonna get a raise and, and be a big Union man, he's gotta show something for it. So it's a, it's a catch 22 situation. Ah, you know everybody could be happy and the Union guy's still gonna try to stir it up because he's gotta make a name for himself. And so far as, (phone rings), that one I gotta answer. I think, I think what happens is that, I think Union organizers move into a company. They could move into a company that's happy. And they can promise them the moon, say, and, and look, if you had fifteen people in the room, and you bought them a round of beer, and said look, why don't you join up with us? We'll get you more money. We'll do this, we'll do that, we'll promise you the moon, okay? All you gotta do is, I mean look at the people that followed that guy down to, what the heck was that where they all wound up committing suicide drinking Kool-aid wi-alright? There are a lot of people in this comp, con, this country or in this world. Who will respond. (talks to somebody else in the room) Do you need to talk to me? No, tell them thank you. We'll see what we can do. Tell them to call me at 12:30. Bunch of ____ (?)

MN: We were, we were back in the 1930's at the Union.

RG: Okay. So I tend to feel, that people can be led, okay. So, I don't know whether they needed a Union, or whether even the employee wanted a Union. But I

RG: do know that in the thirties, Union organization was a big thing, and Unions were, were, they were good in some places, and they were bad in others. There were some pretty wild Union things back in the thirties. You remember, there were people killed, and, and you know running picket lines, and all that kind of stuff.

MN: Anything like that locally?

RG: No, no. I don't think that I know of anything that happened in any plant in this community like that. Obviously the bigger companies were, they went after the bigger companies. They were, they went after you know the, the ah the Heywood Wakefield's, and the, and the Nichols and Stones, and so forth. And, they were trying to set examples of why you should be in the Union, and why you shouldn't be and so forth. Ah, Simplex, ah, I don't think they have a Union today. Ah, but I can assure you that Kurt Watkins, when he was President of the, of, of that company, I mean, he would walk through that company, be sorry that anybody who even breathed the Union. Boom, they were gone. Ah, I don't think we had that situation at Heywood Wakefield.

MN: But you could have done that. I mean at the time

RG: Yeah, you could've done that.

MN: the management had enough power that they could've _____(?)

RG: Yeah, I think so, I think so. I mean after all, I mean if I hired you to work for me, and I didn't want you to work for me any more, I think I have the right to let you go. Say, I'm sorry, we just don't get along, I don't need you, or whatever. It wouldn't, it wouldn't, you know today you've got discriminating laws, and so forth, and so on. A black guy, and a green guy, and a white guy come to the door, you've got to give them all an opportunity. Ah, I have no problem with that. But I can tell you if someone isn't qualified, or they don't want to play the game the way everybody else is playing it. I think you have a perfect right to say, you know, you probably would work out better somewhere else.

MN: So, it wasn't so, ah, finatically anti-union in Heywood Wakefield lets say

RG: I don't think it was.

MN: as it is now at Simplex?

RG: Yeah, no, no. I don't think it ever was. I don't think it ever was. Ah, I know, I know that when they had the labor troubles in 1961, they got to the point where the demands were just, more than the company, I mean if you just sat down and opened the books and looked at them, at the whole situation, you couldn't draw any of the conclusions. Than that this company would go out of business if they, if they ac_____ (?) to their demands. They would just be the end of it. And the company did. Wh, what happened is that they, the ah Board of Directors simply said that, we're gonna close the doors. And, the doors were closed for several days. I mean nobody came to work, and, and so forth. And ah, the Govenor came up, and ah talked with my father, and the Board of Directors, and, and said, you know, won't you reconsider and so forth. And so they sat down, and they said, well how can we make this thing go? And ah, I can't put my hands on it right now, but two things of interest, they, they made up a list of things that would have to be done be the employees if they were gonna open up again. And what happened is that when they went down, prior to the Govenor coming up and all that, what happened just before the, the directors said, that's it, we're gonna close up. They went down to, to vote for an offer, that the company made. I final offer, if you will. And the company said look, this is all we're gonna possibly be able to do. And, we'd like to have you people to vete to accept it. And....so everybody was, you know, in the mood to do that. And one guy....I don't know if he's dead or alive so I won't mention his name. One man stood up, and turned around and told em that they ought to refuse it. Well I'll tell ya, enough rabble-rousers went with this guy, so it triggered the closing of the plant. Okay? The Govenor came up, and, the Board of Directors conviened again, and so forth,

MN: Was your father present at that meeting?

RG: Yeah, oh yeah. And, they had another meeting several days later, of all the employees. I have a tape recording of that somewhere. Okay? And I'll tell you I was behind the curtain at City Hall recording this. And the emotion, and the super-charged atmosphere, and so forth, the hair was right up off the back of my neck. I mean, that's how deeply involved my family was with this company. Okay?

RG: I mean, you just l, you lived it, you breathed it. So ah, they listed out what they wanted was a fair days work, for a fair days pay. They wanted people to be on time. They, they just listed all these things that the employees would have to do if they wanted ah, if they wanted this company to continue to be able to operate. And ah, they asked, ah, my father made this speech, and ah they voted- I'll tell you that what he said is that anybody who wants to go to work with me tomorrow morning at seven o'clock stand up. And you could hear all the chairs falling all over the auditorium as the people lept up to go to work.. They didn't want to be out of work. They didn't want to be wherever the Union wanted em to be. They wanted to be back with Dick Greenwood working at Heywood Wakefield.. The majority of those people just, boled the place over getting out of their chairs to say, I want to go back to work. It was a very moving experience to me. Very much so. You know, I mean, it was as much as any great leader standing up and saying, Who wants to win the war?, or Who wants to go this, or the moon, or whatever. It was fascinating.

MN: And this, and they stood up to say they wanted to go back after this man had gotten them to turn it down?

RG: No. The man, yeah, the man got them to turn it down, that's what caused the closing of the plant for a week, or several days. Okay? Then, they had another meeting. Okay? Which my father read this speech, or gave this speech saying the conditions in which they would re-open. And the last line was, I'll never forget it, "All of you who would like to go to work with me tomorrow morning at seven o'clock, please stand." And you never heard such a goddamn bedlum in your life. Chairs went flying, everybody was up, "I'll go!" I mean it was fascinating, absolutely fascinating. Well,

MN: Did they?

RG: Oh sure they did, sure they did. And ah, you know, things got better. But you had another thing going on at the same time. From about 1956 on, profits were down. So dividends weren't being paid on the stock. And, anybody who had stock, and it wasn't just the family who had stock. There was 120 thousand shares of

RG: stock out there. Anybody who had stock wasn't getting a dividend. And a lot of the stock of that company was held by employees or widows of old time employees. Okay? And in New York City, there is an ethnic group, now everybody does it, but in those days there was a certain ethnic group that used to like to buy up businesses and liquidate them. That was their whole point in life. And,

MN: To get some money out of it?

RG: Yeah. What they would do, is they would buy a business, close it down, sell the assets, rape it, and leave. Okay? And ah, Heywood Wakefield had assets. They had paid for land and buildings and machinery, and so forth, and, and certain things that were worth some money. So if you could buy it, or take control of it, you could just, I mean, you didn't have to have anything more than 51% of the stock, and you could say look, we're gonna close the place down. We got more stock than you got, so we're gonna close it down. And then liquidate the goddamn thing. You know? You wouldn't pay off any creditors because the creditors, you just

say, we're gonna liquidate, that's that. We'll pay your bill, and we'll see you later, and never mind what happens to the employees, and so forth. Okay? Well these guys started to quietly buy up the stock at Heywood Wakefield. And they put it out, put it out on the, on the street and in the, in the ah stock market place that any time you can pick up some Heywood Wakefield stock you want to buy, we'll pay up to so many dollars a share. Okay? And, brokers would call up you, and your husband worked at Heywood Wakefield for 45 years, and you'd say, now Mrs. ah Norkunas ah, ah, we see that you own 350 shares of Heywood Wakefield stock. Oh yes, my husband worked there for many years, and so forth and we'd like to, we'd like to buy it from you. Oh I could never sell that. My husband, you know, and so forth, and say now well, Mrs. Norkunas you, you ah, haven't been getting any dividends now for three years and that must be hurting you a little bit. Oh yes, but I'm barley making it, and so forth. Well, we'd like to buy your stock. We're willing to give you a pretty good amount of money for it. Oh I couldn't do that, Dick Greenwood was such a good friend of my father's, and so forth, or my husband. And they would go on like that. Well they would keep wearing

em down. They'd say look, you know, the companys just gonna go down the drain, ah, we've been reading the reports, and you can call up Dick Greenwood and he's not gonna give you any good news. You ought to get out now while you can, and we'll give you 20 bucks a share, or 32.50 a share, or 10¢ a share or whatever, and finally the widow would say, well I guess maybe your right. And sh'd sell, and they'd add a little more to the pile. Well, when things began to get a little hot, they had 44 thousand shares out of 120 thousand. That's getting pretty close. Okay? Now, at the same time, you're getting into the sixties, 63, 64. My father, by that point in time has lost some major people in his management team.

MN: Lost?

RG: By death. Okay? Vice President General Sales Manager died of cancer. The treasurer has a heart attack. Two major people were his team, that made that place click. And ah,

MN: And those, they had been on his team for quite some time.

RG: Oh yes, oh yeah. They were on his team through the thirties and forties, and fifties, okay? But ah, they all died like in the middle fifties. And instead of going outside of the company, and getting new talent, perhaps, they promoted from within. And in the case of this company, they promoted two brothers. One you've met, George, and John.

MN: It was your father who promoted them?

RG: Oh yeah, well, and the Board Directors and so forth. A bad decision. A very bad decision. Ah, made because of family, ah because of what was available or whatever. The treasurer was replaced by an assistant treasurer. When the assistant treasurer died they brought somebody from the Michigan plant. What they should've done is gone out and inter, had interviews, and gotten a good substantial treasurer from some other company.

MN: But that was part of his whole family policy Ex (?)

RG: Well, it was, it was, it was to try to promote from within. It was a bad move. I mean this is Monday morning quarterback from now. You can look back

RG: and say, well they shouldn't had done this, and they shouldn't have done that. But now, I can't sit here and say that I knew all the answers or all the circumstances. It's very difficult to say well why did they decide to do this, why did they decide to do that. Well, they decided to do it because that's probably the only option they may have had at that time. Okay? Maybe they couldn't afford to go out. Maybe whoever was in the company at a particular position had a certain number of shares of stock or a certain amount of influence. Okay? Ah, George Heywood at one time was married to my sister. My sister died in 1961 of cancer. And ah, but I'm sure that because he was a son-in-law, and so forth that that was a consideration when he was moved along in the company.

MN: And what's the relationship between your family, and George Heywood's family?

RG: Well George, and his brother John were both working at the company, and their father did. Are decendents of the youngest of the five Heywood brothers who fathered the company in 1826. So we're distant cousins.

MN: But it's still a sense of family?

RG: Oh I would think so. I would like to think it was. Yeah.

MN: Okay. And so ah, you were saying that your father also had a heart attack around that time, didn't he?

RG: My father had a heart attack in 1964. Now at that point in time, I can tell you why he had a heart attack. He was keeping two secretaries going. All the time with the work that he was turning out. He was handling not only his job, but he was handling part of the Vice President and General Sales Managers jobs, because George was incompetant to do it. He was also overseeing the Treasurers job because the treasurer was incompetant to do it. Okay, he was doing too much.

MN: But he would remove them.

RG: Well, that's part of the problem. You know. That's part of the problem. You ever read a book called Peter Principle?

MN: No, I haven't.

RG: You should read it. What it does is, the, the, the philosophy expounded there is that every man reaches his own level of incompetance. Okay?

MN: (laughs)

RG: Okay? And you may be a hell of an interviewer, and you may be a wonderful scholar and residence, but maybe the next step up the ladder would be too much for you. Okay? And that happens to a lot of people in business.

MN: But you ^{aspire} ~~expire~~ till you reach that level.

RG: Well that's right. But you either ^{aspire} ~~expire~~ to a level that your not competent for. I, I can tell you that we had a guy that worked in the shop and we, we made a foreman out of him. He was terrible. He just did not know how to manage people. He was a hell of a craftsman. He could do a million things, but I had to, I had to bring him back down to the bench because he would have killed himself. He hadn't had the smarts to pick up the telephone and call out to a the department and say, do you see the mill right working up there? He would go out there himself. And while he was out there, he wasn't looking at something else. He didn't know how to use the phone, he didn't know how to delegate, he didn't know how to manage, and so forth. You know. He didn't know how to handle people. But he was a hell of a craftsman. So there's a lower, ____ (?) example of the Peter Principle. Both George and John are college graduates. Their qualified, to a certain level. But they weren't qualified to run that company. Not at all.

MN: So their, they were put in those leadership positions because of their family name.

RG: Exactly. If their, yeah, in their affiliation in the fact that they were already working there doing other things or whatever. You know. Now, in 1964 when my father had a heart attack, the Board, the senior members of the Board realized that no way was there anybody working at Heywood Wakefield that was qualified to take over my father's job. And no way was my father going to be immortal and go on forever. So they had to do something. So they began to seek and, somebody on the outside of the company. Okay? They found somebody.

MN: Was this with your father's knowledge?

RG: Oh yes. Oh yes. Everybody knew including George and John who were on the Board of Directors. Okay? Everybody knew that, that the Board felt, and my

RG: My father felt that they ought to be looking for a real sharp, talented guy who could lead this company. Okay? That my father would step up the Chairman of the Board and be on an advisory basis and this guy would take over the day-to-day running of the company. They found that man. And he worked for IT&T which is International Telephone and Telegraph. And they had a plant in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. And this man arrived to run that plant while that plant was on strike and picket line was going back-and-forth. And he negotiated a settlement, and he got the people back into that plant. I met him on several occasions. On one occasion I was asked to deliver some important papers to him. He knew what I did, he had met me before. I came in, I didn't have my coat off, and he was asking me questions. What do you think we should do with these buildings over here in the back, number five and six and twenty-seven, and so forth.

MN: Oh he was already in a position _____(?)

RG: No, no he

MN: or that's still in Rhode Island?

RG: He was still working in Rhode Island. He was looking over the situation of what he would do

MN: at Heywood Wakefield. *****SAID TOGETHER.

RG: at Heywood Wakefield. See, he was trying to decide, am I going to go to work there. He's trying to sell himself to our Board of Directors. I think if you'd did this, I think if you'd did that, I mean, if you were asked for somebody to come in and help you, you're not going to take the first guy that comes in the door. You're going to interview somebody that looks like they got the qualities you, you're looking for. And if a guy comes in and he says, he wants that job he's gonna say, Here are some of the things I've been thinking about, I've been reviewing the company records. Ah, I've looked at the plans. I've done this, and I've done that. I think if you did this and you did that, and so forth, the Board of Directors would probably nod their approval and say, This guy knows something. This guys gonna be alright. Okay? The point that I'm trying to make, is that this guy peppered me with questions. Intelligent questions.

RG: What did I think about boom, boom, boom, boom? He was picking my brain like that. And I was loving it. Because I sure as hell didn't have anybody doing that down there now. You would go in and say, You know, we ought to make a decision on something like that, and they'd sit there and not, they couldn't make a decision. I, I got totally frustrated in my later years working there. No direction. Nobody knew what the hell they were doing. You know? So anyway, this guy said, Would you like a tour of our plant? And I, sure. So they made (phone rings) where were we?

MN: Ah..

RG: Oh I was talking about this guy going on plant tour. Well, I tell ya, it was my father revisited. Walked out on the plant. The first person who say, him said, I Mr. B. Hi Thelma, how are you today? Fine. Next woman we run in to, Hi Mr. B. Hi Suzy, how are you? Mr. B, are you going to the Christmas party? Yup. She says, I want the first dance. Okay. Go into another room somebody said, Look at that! And he had, up there, zero defects for the department for so many days. You know. Good work Joe, you guys are doing a hell of a job. Room after room, after room we went through. It was just as if my father, I was walking with my father. You know? The funniest thing was one room we walked into, and he walked in, and he said to the guy, says, Well Joe, how many tons of, did you put through the machine today? Twenty-five tons. Good boy Joe. Without you we'd be in trouble. Big smile, you know? Went out the door, and he says, You know Rick, he says, the first week I was here I walked through this room every day, I'd say Hi Joe. F U. You know? Every day for a week when he walked through there. How ya doing? FU. One day I stopped, he says, You know Joe, you probably think you don't have a very good job here. He made him listen. But he says, but he says, all of this, what they did is made electrical cords. And they, it was an extrusion process. So they'd make the wire and they'd wind it up and then they'd put the rubber over it, and there would always be scrap left over. So they take these big slabs of rubber that come out of the machine and they went up to Joe. And Joe shuvveled em into a hopper and they ground it back up and they put it through the

RG: process again. So we told Joe how important his job was, and how important he was, and how many tons of, of rubber he put through, and how many dollars he saved the company. And Joe got so big, he had to get a new shirt cause his buttons broke. Okay? And what happens, he was recognized, as he should have been recognized as contributing to the whole effort. And from that point on, he knew what to tell Joe when he walked through that door. What Joe wanted to hear, what you'd want to hear. You're doing a good job. That's employee relationship, employee employer relationship. Okay? I tell ya, I was totally impressed with this guy. Well, obviously they made an offer to him, to come to work. Now I don't know what the pay scales were, don't care. But lets say they offered him 50 thousand dollars. Okay? Maybe he was making 35. Now maybe he was making 50 and they offered him 100, I don't know what it is. Just reletively, okay? Well he considered that offer, and he said, you know, that's not too much more that I'm making now, and probably if I can do a good job here, I could go somewhere else in IT&T and make some money, and so forth. He said, I'd like to have a chance to make some, to buy some stock. If I make, if I get the company turned around, and we're really clicking, this company's stocks gonna be worth some money. I'd like to have an op, to have some stock options. Oh geez, I don't know what we can do about that, we only got 120 thousand shares, and their all out. Well ah, maybe, you could put out some more stock. Okay? So they called a special meeting to authorize, to vote to authorize the issuance of more stock. Well, when you do that, you water-down the value of the stock. Okay? And you can betcha that the guys with the 44 thousand shares in New York came right out the woodwork and said, Oh, wait a minute, you're not gonna do that. And they got a court of junction against the company that prevented them from doing it. Okay? So they turned around and they said, you want to buy the stock, we'll sell you the stock. I think the price at the time was like a million and a half dollars. Well we had a bunch of meetings. Okay, I owned some stock, my father owned some stock different people in the Board of Directors owned stock, different families, different employees, and so forth. And, part of the thing that was going on here

as, once we found out they were trying to buy up the stock, we sent a letter out to all the stockholders and said, look, if you don't want your stock, give us a chance to buy it back. Okay?

MN: Yeah, come to us first.

RG: Come to us first, okay? So certain people did that. They would call up and say, Well ya know I hate to tell you this but you know, but I haven't gotten a dividend for 10 years or five years, and I just can't hold onto it any more, and their at my door every day and they wanna give me 30 dollars a share. I'd rather sell it to you. And we would have, you know 300 shares that we gotta come up with 900 bucks to buy. Well I don't want any more stock, my father didn't want any more stock. George Heywood didn't want any more stock. We were already up to here with it. I had a whole bunch of stock, I wasn't getting any dividends. Okay? So you tr, you go out and you try to find someone who might want to buy it. Well who the hell would want to buy stock that wasn't paying a dividend? See, so what they did is they went to some of their suppliers. And they go to a place like the local hardware store that was selling 300 thousand dollars worth of sand paper a year to the company, or something like that. Say, uh, you know, Where in trouble, you gotta help us out. Can you do something for us? And maybe they'd sell a thousand dollars worth of stock to them. Okay? So they tried to place the stock to keep it from getting in the hands of the opposition, if you will. And they were fairly successful in doing that. And of course those people, you know, there was a thousand dollar investment or a three thousand dollar investment. We weren't getting a dime back, but at least the company was still buying sand paper or whatever from

MN: And did the employees have the option to buy stock?

RG: I think, I think it was, yeah, I, I, I, would have guessed that any employee who, who had the money and wanted to buy it could buy it. But then again, if you were an employee would you want to buy stock if it wasn't paying any dividend?

I don't think so. You know? You just wouldn't want to do it. So when the, when they wanted to sell the company for a million and a half, or whatever, there was no

RG: way for us to raise that money. None of us wanted to put any money of our own, and we were already in trouble with the banks. We, you know, anyway you'd turn around we were in trouble. Well that was, that, we go back and now there's a problem because we can't get any stock, and we're not gonna be able to get this guy to go to come to work, cause we're not gonna give him any stock options. Okay? Now in the mean time it doesn't take a, it didn't take a road scholar for George(?)

George

INTERVIEWEE: Richard Greenwood

INTERVIEWER: Martha Norkunas

SUBJECT:

DATE: July 21, 1988

TRANSCRIBER: Corrie Morrissey

SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO OF TWO

RG: George, to realize, particularly George, that if this guy comes to work as President, George is probably going to wind up with a desk in the boiler room. Okay? So, George decided to see what he could do to a, quote, in his opinion, save the company. And he went down over many drinks. And Kurt Watkins was the ego-maniacal ah, head of Simplex Time Recorder Company, father of the President, Chris Watkins, and George would say, Well, you know, you ought to buy the Heywood Wakefield stock from the guys in New York. And Chris would say, I mean Kurt would say, What the hell should I do that for?

MN: Did he have any stock in the company?

RG: Did Kurt have any?

MN: Yeah.

RG: Ah, he might have had a few shares. But he says, Why would I want to buy that stock, George? What good would it do me? I wouldn't own the company. I wouldn't be able to run it. He says, That's not enough to take control. And George said, Oh yes, because my brother and I, and two or three of our friends will take our stock and blow it with you, and we'll get rid of Dick Greenwood. His ex-father-in-law. Okay? Well that appealed to Kurt, because Kurt used to, it used to make him angry as hell. When anybody mentioned Gardner, Mass, they would mention Heywood Wakefield. And when anybody talked about the biggest industrials in Gardner, Mass, it was Dick Greenwood. Not Kurt Watkins. And Dick Greenwood was a very humble person, but Kurt Watkins wasn't. I mean, Kurt Watkins, if he could get away with it would take a brass band down the street every day and say, I'm Kurt Watkins. Who else would come around and hand out Christmas turkeys, and bags of silver dollars to their employees? I mean you, that's just a being, that's

RG: a very flamboyant man. That's a man whose got to have his feathers patted every day. You know? And he would get on his microphone down there at the shop with his State to the Union message, Now hear this, over all the goddamn loud speakers and so forth. I mean the guy was an egomaniac. So, obviously a chance to be now, the head cheese, and own everything in Gardner....My father gets a phone call out of Chicago out at the furniture show from George who says Kurt's bought the stock. My father says, What do you mean? Kurt Watkins has bought the stock from the guys in New York.

MN: He was saying this ____ (?)

RG: He was telling my father this. Okay? Kurt had said I'm gonna buy it, or in fact he did buy it. He, he called up the people in New York says I'll buy it.

MN: And, your father didn't know this was going on?

RG: Didn't know any part of this was going on. Kay, this is all under the table, behind the closed doors, or whatever, and so forth. So this comes as a shock to my father. Ah, and George says, When you get back, Kurt would like to talk to you. So my father comes back from his business trip and sets up a meeting time and goes over to Simplex Time Recorder to be told that he's no longer going to be an employee at Heywood Wakefield where he's been for 45 years.

MN: Kurt Watkins tells him this.

RG: Yeah, he says, I've got control of the company now, Dick, and you're not going to be re-elected President in the stockholders meeting next month. So he says to him, ah,

MN: And this was just after he purchased the stock?

RG: Yeah. Oh yeah.

MN: And what was that 65, 66?

RG: 66. See? So, he says to my, my father, you know, like so forth. I mean, who, who had the rug pulled out from under him. Okay? So, ah, Kurt said, Now we're not gonna get rid of your (phone rings), hang on. So anyway, ah, Kurt said, We'd like to keep you on as a consultant, Dick, you know? And we're gonna pay you x dollars a year for five years, and usually we renew these things, and so forth. And,

RG: ah, you know, my fathers there out, with the wind knocked out of him, and nodding his head, and so forth, and so on. So they prepared an agreement for him to be a consultant for the next five years and so forth.

MN: Had he had a relationship with Kurt Watkins, I mean he must have ____ (?)

RG: Social, social. Social, and you know, one business man to another, in the community, that's all.

MN: But there was no loyalty between them particularly ____ (?)

RG: No, no. And Kurt's father, ah, Edward G. had ah, been at Heywood Wakefield as a plant engineer. And while at Heywood Wakefield had invented the time clock. And in fact the first time clocks were made by Heywood. And, ah, if you look at the first Simplex time clock it says Heywood number one on it.

MN: Because the way this is portrayed publicly,

RG: Mmm hmmm.

MN: this was my understanding, perhaps this is my own idiosyncratic interpretation but I don't think so.

RG: Mnn hmmm.

MN: Is that ah, Heywood Wakefield's about to go down the drain, Simplex steps in and saves the company, and then why Richard Greenwood leaves is vague.

RG: That's right.

MN: But they, but, but, because of their historical relationship, Simplex saves Heywood Wakefield.

RG: Yeah.

MN: And that's the way, it's portrayed as I see it.

RG: That's right. Well, you just got the inside story, or you're getting it.

Okay? And I'll give you a little more background on maybe I'll ask you to punch the tape off and tell you something, then if you want to put it on the tape after we talk, fine. But, ah, so my father gets handed a contract to sign, but the provision is that he sell all his stock in the company.

MN: If he wanted to stay on as consultant.

RG: If he wants, if he wants the consulting contract, he has to sell his stock

RG: to Kurt. Okay? He kept one share of stock. So he continued to get an annual report, and divested himself of all the stock he had in Heywood Wakefield. At a distressed price. A low price. Okay? And then it came to me, and I had to do the same. I had a choice, you know.

MN: What was your option?

RG: My option? Out the door probably. I was, I was ah, I had two kids, a year and a half, and two years old at the time. Where was I gonna go? Okay? I had no option. All my life I'd worked at Heywood Wakefield. I went right out of school into Hewood Wakefield. And ah, I was like ah, 34, 35 years old. Somewhere along there. And ah, so, I mean I didn't, they didn't so much as demand, but the writing was on the wall. And I felt that it was of my best interest to, better do it.

MN: And you could keep your job?

RG: Yeah. They, they didn't say that, okay? But I felt that I was on very shaky grounds. I mean if there was that much animosity that they were getting rid of my father, how much time did I have there? Unless I played along with the game. Okay? I'm gonna say that that probably cost me personally about somewhere between 40 and 60 thousand dollars, to do that. Which was a lot of money then, a lot of money. But at, at one point in time the value of the stock, after the transaction took place, and what I got paid for it, the difference was somewhere between 40 and 60 thousand dollars. Enough to educate a child in college, among other things. Okay? So, ah, if you'll punch out that machine for a minute, after Kurt took control of the company, my father was out. Okay? George became President. Okay? Didn't take too long to figure out George couldn't do it. So they made John executive Vice President, and literally George's desk was moved off the executive floor, up to an obscure office on the fourth floor. And he was supposed to report his comings and goings to somebody. If Kurt had lived another year, George had been gone.

MN: Oh, so Kurt realized what the situation was.

RG: It didn't take Kurt too long to realize that George didn't have anything

RG: upstairs. He couldn't run that goddamn show if he had to.

MN: And how involved did Kurt get in the management of Heywood Wakefield?

RG: Well he was getting there. He was catching up with them. I mean, Kurt was no fool, he knew how to run a company. You know, he was an excentric guy, he was an egomaniac guy. We're all egomaniacs and excentric to a degree, okay? But he could make money. He knew how to make money, and he knew how to direct people, and so forth. He might do it in his own flamboy, it was totally opposite the way my father worked, but he made a success out of, out of Simplex, but you know it's very easy to have somebody at Simplex say, Well you guys shouldn't be doing what we're doing, and so forth. It was a totally different business. Simplex sells fire alarm equipment. I won't buy it. It's over priced. I have to pay them for a smoke detector the price that I would charge you for an equal smoke detector that I can buy anywhere else. You know? The prices are elevated beyond belief. When you go, when, when that salesman goes out to sell a system, they will not tell you the price of everything. They'll sell you a system for so many thousand dollars. They have a little book that they open like this, and they shut it quick. They don't tell you that smoke detec, the only way you're gonna find it out is if you have to buy one, then you'll get a bill, see? We, I bought a system for em from the Tennessee plant. And we didn't pay the bill. And I called them up and I said, I need a breakdown on the equipment. Well we don't do that. We just have a fixed price for the whole system. And I said, Well I'm sorry, I says, I have to apportion this out into different divisions of accounting. And I have to know how much a pull-station is, how much a horn is, and so forth. It was like pulling teeth. Boy were they reluctant to finally give it to me. You know? And that's how I got into know what their pricing program was.

MN: Well why wouldn't they,

RG: So anyway,

MN: Why wouldn't they have put John as President? Wasn't he somewhat more familiar?

RG: That's why they made him the executive Vice President. See?

MN: Why not President?

RG: Well, they eventually made him President, he eventually became President, and George became Chairman-of-the-Board. Okay? And ah, that was _____(?) but, John had a son Jack. And Jack was hired to be the clerk of the works when we were building the plant in Tennessee, the plastics plant in Tennessee. I probably would have had that job if I want to go down there. When they asked me about, see I came to John Heywood in 1971. And I said I would like to talk with you. This is typical about the way these guys work. I said, I, I'm frustrated with my job, John, and I've got to know what this company's doing, and where we're going, and we have any kind of a business plan. Do we know how we're doing? Well, what do you mean? I said well, I bring up something and I can't get a decision. Um, I just don't see any direction here, and ah, no answers. And I says, On top of that, I said, I need to have, I need to be, these are my peak earning years. I need to be making all the money I can make. I've got kids to educate. I've got college bills to pay. And he says, Well, he says, you know, and so forth, and I says, Look, John, let me tell you, You know I have my key business, and it's developed into an alarm business, and I said, I work at night, and I work on the weekend, and so forth. This company has, like a lot of company's town, has a traditional noon hour, so the whistle blows at 12 o'clock, everybody goes home to lunch, or whatever, and it blows again at 1 o'clock. I can get a sandwich out of the vending machine at 11:30 and work at my desk, and go out the door at 12 and be back at 1, and I can make more money in that hour, in my key business/alarm business than you pay me in a day. Well, he says, that sounds like the tail wagging the dog. And I says, Be whatever it is. He says, that's an economic fact and I'm in my peak earning years so I need to know what I'm doing. I can't just sit here while you fuddle around here for the next five or ten years. So I says, Well, he says, Well, we'll, we'll, we'll think it over, and so forth. I waited eight goddamn weeks before I finally got a telephone call from John one day that he wanted to talk with me. And I go up, and he says, Well we thought about all you had to say, and so forth, and there's nothing we can do. I says, What?! After 23 years of working for Heywood Wakefield or however many years it was, you wouldn't even offer me a \$500 a year raise? Well,

RG: he says, you didn't say you'd accept that. He says, you never even asked. I said, There is no dialogue here. I said, But now that I know how you feel about it, fine! And I got up and walked out. And from that day on I said, Their gonna get 8 hours a day out of me. I'm not gonna get up in the middle of the night when it's snowing and make sure the parking lots get plowed. I'm not gonna worry about anything after hours. Unless somebody pays me for it extra. I'm gonna go out and do my 8 hours a day, and I'm out of there. I used to breathe that place. I had the fire alarm in that place used to punch holes in the tape up here to tell me where the fires were. The, my desk phone, you turn the knob, well there it is. See that, that's my desk phone, I never changed it. There's my desk phone at Heywood Wakefield so when the guards had a problem, they could pick it up, and I'd pick up the phone next to my bed, and say what's the matter? I'm in building 23 and I gotta leave. I'll be right down. That was my baby. Okay? A million square footer. Okay?

MN: And what was your title at the time?

RG: Bullshit! Maintenance superintendant _____ (?) What, I did some interesting things there. One of the things I did was to save a lot of money. And I saved a lot of money in a number of different ways. You know, thousands. I reduced the insurance premium by 25 thousand dollars a year for that corporation. That was a lot of money in the 60's. Okay? And I did some, some fancy footwork on when the state came in and demanded that we do something about check valves, and, and cross-check valves, and so forth on the water lines because of possible pollution problems, and so forth. It would have cost 80 thousand dollars. I came up with an alternative solution. Our, our contribution to that was 2,000 dollars. Okay, a savings of 78 grand. So, you know, my request for a modest raise wasn't unfounded. Alright? Well I decided from that point on that I'm gonna make my plans to get the hell out of this company, because their gonna go down the drain. I mean I knew this anyway but I sure as hell knew it after that conversation.

MN: Well, the writing must have been on the wall, because I've also heard from a number of different workers,

RG: Sure.

MN: that in the early 70's, everybody could, everybody knew it was going.

RG: That's right. You could, you, you, I mean, and I'm gonna tell you more about that. Okay? The thing is is that, you know, I, I would go them and say, You know we need a new roof on building 5. I can see the sky. They didn't, instead of saying We're in trouble, we've got to conserve money any way we can, we're just not gonna be able to do that, you just wouldn't get an answer. So you'd walk off, and you'd say, well you know, What am I doing? Why do I, you know. And you'd just, everything fell on deaf ears. Cause they didn't know how to make a decision. They couldn't go to the bathroom. I literally know that John was asking his 25 year old son what to do. The 55 year old man was asking the 25 year old man, what do you think we should do.

MN: And meanwhile, this guy from ITT was just gone.

RG: He's gone. He's gone. He went on and made a success out of his life and so forth.

MN: When they made the deal with Watkins?

RG: Oh yeah, that's it. He's gone. See? I feel very strongly that if those two brothers had said look, we really don't, I mean I never aspired to anything more than I could do. You know? I never got in to upper level management, or whatever. I knew what I did. I knew how to make a place run. I knew how to maintain it, I knew how to do fire stuff, I knew all that kind of stuff, and I saved the company a lot of money doing it. And there's a good record track, if anybody wants to look at it.

MN: So you didn't want to be President?

RG: I didn't want any part of that. It's way beyond my abilities. Okay? I want nothing to do with it. I'm not a sales oriented type of person to go out and run a big sales force. I'm more into the mechanics, the engineering, that kind of stuff. That was my ____ (?)

MN: Well wasn't that pressure on you to get into that kind of ____ (?)

RG: Not really, not really. My father did nothing for me. I made my way in

RG: Heywood Wakefield. My father was afraid to do anything for me. He wasn't afraid to do it for his son-in-law, and his other relatives, but my father never paved any streets for me. Never. You know, the only privilege I got was to go to work there. But I made the jobs that I had. Now what happened, is that I was planning to leave there in the spring of 72. They came to me before that time and they said that they wanted to, to ah, give me a raise, and give me new title, and so forth. And they had some projects they wanted me to work on. And the two things that were bothering the hell out of them is that they need to get this plastic plant built in Tennessee. And they had problems with OSHA, and DEQE. Okay, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and so forth. Typical inspectorship may come into my language, and they come into town, and where do they go, the biggest place. And they clobbered us. Okay? Cause if you wanted to get the rule books, you can find anything wrong anywhere, okay? I see it all the time. I can walk into your apartment or go out to your car, and I can show you all kinds of problems. You know? So anyway, they gave me a burgular raise, changed my title, I was Maintenance Superintendant. And they said, ah, Do you think Charlie, who was my assistant at the time, could handle all that, sure, so they made him Maintenance Superintendant and I became ____ (?) Planning Engineer. And I spent a lot of time going down to the plant down south. And that's when, when he, when he talked to me about that, I said Look, I said, if you think I'm gonna go down there and you know, stay in Tennessee for 3 or 4 months, I can't afford to do that. I says, I have too much income on the outside from my other business, which is worth something to me nights and weekends. Now the only way that I could do that would, you'd have to pay me for what I was losing. And I don't think you're gonna want to do that. But I said, I'll go down for a week, and come, and, you know, and then come home in two or three weeks, and go down and spend a week down there if it's necessary. But, don't count on me to be the clerk of the works. That's when they hired his son who was, who failed to graduate from architecture school, and went over, I don't know if he ever finished that up or not.

MN: George's son.

RG: This is Jan, no this is Jack. John's son Jack. Okay, so Jack, Jack's a nice guy. Okay? Jack came to work for the company and went to a clerk of the works for that job in Tennessee. And then when that became done, Jack came up here. And Jack was in his father's pocket all the time, and went out and did all these different things and so forth. And made a lot of bad moves, as far as I'm concerned. But, you know, it, it's funny. I know that ah, guy asked me one day, there was something in the rubbish truck. And he says, Could I have that? I said, Well you better ask Jack. So he, he went out and he says ah, there's such and such a thing in the rubbish truck, it's going to the dump. He says, could I have it? And Jack said, Yeah, for 10 bucks, or whatever, and so forth. All the sudden it had a value because somebody else wanted it. See? If, if employees came to me and said, ah, this old iron bar has been behind the door, is it something that's worth a lot? I'd say, well what do you want to use it for? Well I got something I want to do at home. I said, Take it. I'll give you a slip for it. I'd write a slip, Pass so and so with iron bar. You know? I mean, it was of no value to the company. If I could help an employee, that's what I wanted to do. That was the way we did things. But this, MN: Yeah, because what it does, is it discourages them from asking.

RG: Yeah. Yeah, you know? And ah, so there was a lot of that kind of thing it was just, it was just,

MN: And what did Jack do there?

RG: Well, I don't know what he did, he assisted his father in, in, and ah, I don't really know what his title was you know? But I know, better punch the machine off.

MN: You mentioned ah, I'm gonna ask you three things. First, you mentioned that what happened to the company afterwards, that they sold the buildings and the machines to Murphy?

RG: Yeah, well they decided that they, that they ought to sell the Gardner plant. They couldn't make any money here. Well part of the reason they couldn't make any money here is because some of lines that were supporting the Gardner plant were moved out. When the neighbors on Richmond street complained about the dust coming from the factory, particularly the plastics operation, and when the Department of

Air Quality Standards, and so forth started to become a big thing in, in, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ah, they came down hard on Heywood Wakefield. You're putting this poison out in the atmosphere, and so on, and so forth. And we started doing the best things we could do with it. Well, we were cramped for space, and cramped for technology, and all kinds of problems, and if we were gonna do this, We had to go and do it somewhere where we had the land and machinery, and so forth. We had a plant site in Tennessee. We already had an existing plant. So the most logical thing to do was to move the whole thing to Tennessee. Okay? Well, when we did that, the sawdust that we were making in Gardner, which went into the manufacturer of Heywoodite, plastic seats, no longer was available to Tennessee. We had to go out and buy sawdust. Okay? It was a natural flow of stuff, you made furniture, you ground up sawdust in the wakes, you blew it over and you bagged it, and you run it through machines, and you made plastic seats, it was great! You know it was a perpetual motion machine. Okay? So, you might say that part of the means of Heywood Wakefield was trying to comply with regulations and, and complaints, and so forth. Ah, if you have a, a business that makes widgeits, and all of the sudden the market for widgeits drops, you're in trouble. But if you make widgeits, and gadgets, and gadgets are doing okay, and widgeits aren't, that gets you through the hard times. Okay? Heywood Wakefield in one point in time had several lines of furniture. They also made bus seating, car, ah, railroad car seating, school furniture, and so forth. All of that stuff was made at one time in Gardner. Okay? And they kept taking these lines out, okay, trying to make them more profitable, less cost. I'll tell you that when I first went to work there, among other things, I used to walk around the plant, inspecting the plant for safety hazards, and you know mechanical problems, and so forth. I'd go out and, and layout projects for men who repair things, and all that kind of stuff. Well I walked around, and christ I, I would look in every nook and corner. Then you'd walk around the corner, and underneath the stairs they'd be somebody sleeping. So I'd have the carpenter shop come along and clean that out, and put a light in there, and put a screen in it, and padlock it so nobody could hide in there. I walked in one night, I was ah, in the toolmill where we made tubing. And I wanted to get a rag, and there

was a room that we called the ragroom. And I walked in there, and luckily I had a flashlight. I would have stepped on a body. There was a guy laying there. I went and got a security guard and came back, and I kicked the guy in the foot and he woke up, and I says, Who are you?! Where do you work? He says, I work in the tubemill. I says, Well why aren't you over there? He says, well, he says, It's my turn to sleep. What do you mean its your turn to sleep? He says, Well we don't have enough work so I sleep from so and so, and he confessed what he was doing. He was gone very soon. Okay? They had too much help there. And rather than, than somebody admit that, they were splitting the job with two people. One would sleep half the shift, and the other guy was working half the shift. Well what does that do to your cost? Okay? I went up in the welding department, one day, and I watched the time study man. And he had his clock. And the minute the welder started to weld, he punched the clock. Cause he was timing how long it would take to weld a joint on a chair. And when the welder stopped, he punched the clock again. Well I'm not dumb. I went and got a mask. And the next time the guy did it, I put a mask on. And the guy was taking the, the welding thing and he was going back and forth, back and forth doing the job over and over again. The time study man thought it took four times as long as it did. That's how you set the peace rate. Okay? It takes so many minutes and so many seconds to weld such and such a joint.

MN: But didn't, weren't the time study men familiar with the fact the people would slow it way down? ~~uh~~

RG: No.. It wasn't until I went to the cost department and said, Every man timing, welding, has to have a mask. And they all were issued masks. So now when they went up there, they put the mask on. And they watched the guy do the job. Well it raised hell with the guys up there because, you know how I knew this? At 2 o'clock in the afternoon I used to find them playing cards, four guys sitting around playing cards. They were still making their money. How were they doing it, because they had so many goddamn peace work tickets ahead. So, there's your, there's, you know you're killing the golden goose. You're not doing your fair share of, of work, but you're getting paid for it. Now every time that somebodys sleeping someplace,

RG: everytime somebodys smoking someplace, everytime somebodys playing cards someplace, their not producing. The costs are going on. You have to elevate the price of the product. You loose competitiveness on the marketplace, you destroy your own job. You know? And it's like, it's like stealing from the company. Oh the company's so big they'll never miss it. But if everybodys doing it, what's it doing to the company? See? You're, you're, you're architected your own demans.

MN: So, back again, so when the company was, it was clear that it was going to fold in Gardner,

RG: Mmmmm humm.

MN: they decided to sell?

RG: Okay, one of the things that they did was they, is, is, ah, and they had to find a buyer for the Gardner plant. And ah, you know, who the hell wants to buy a plant that's run, running down? That they had let a lot of maintenance things go because they were't making enough money to do it. So they struck a deal with Jim Murphy who was a furniture machinery sales company. And he bought the whole place. And practically the next day, he's got half of it sold to somebody else. Why the hell couldn't the Heywood Brothers have done that? I mean if they didn't need all that space, why didn't they go out and make some contacts and rent the thing. If its that profitable to buy it and rent it, why didn't they do it?

MN: Oh, so he bought it, and then he rented it to the _____(?)

RG: No, he bought it and sold half of it to the casting company. Then he turned around and he rented it, rented back to Heywood Wakefield the space they wanted.

MN: To do what?

RG: Well they were gonna, they shrunk their manufacturing down. They weren't doing it as much, they were doing little, less.

MN: Oh, but they still manufactured it.

RG: Yeah, well for a little while longer. They were just assembling some stuff at that point in time.

MN: And then this guy Murphy would have sold off a lot of the machines, piece by piece.

RG: Well, he, he owned them. He could sell em. He bought them. You know? And ah, you know eventually there was nothing left. But you know, its, I think it's a tribute to the management, and the integrity, and the strength of that company, when you stop and think about it. That company closed up about 1978 or 79. That's 12 years after my father left. It had to be something, they had to have been doing something right for it to last that long. You know?.....I really feel badly, as I said, I really feel badly. A lot of people, today are lost because they don't have that place to go to. There were people that used to be down there at 6 o'clock in the morning so they could have the first parking space by the door. You know? There were a lot of little idiosyncrasies like that that were just wonderful. You know there were people who really, that whole place was there whole life. I'm sure you, I'm sure you found this out and talked to people.

MN: Workers rather than management?

RG: Oh yes, oh yes. Oh yes, yup. I meet people now, I don't, you know, I used to meet different ones that would say when my father was still alive, How's your father? And want to talk about the company and my father, and so forth. You know? I can go into the elderly housing projects, I went down to the elderly housing project because somebody, well they had some kind of a lock problem, or whatever. And I went down there to help them out, and I bumped in to two or three old Heywood employees. And I still, I, I bump in to em now. I'm not in Gardner as much as I used to be because my business takes me out of town, but I can walk downtown, and see alot of employees. I'll tell you a funny story, I hadn't been working at the company too long, maybe a couple, three months. And I walked downtown one day with my father. It was almost embarrassing. We're walking down this street. And everybody going by is, Hi Dick, Hi Sam, Hi Dick, Hi Joe, you know. Back and forth back and forth, and so forth. Along comes a guy that I know that worked in the hardware store. Hi Reinie, hi Rick. My father says, Who's that?! He was blown away by the fact that he didn't know who that person was. You know? And ah, it was just funny. But he, boy I'll tell ya, he knew him.

MN: But he was a formal person wasn't he?

RG: Yeah.

MN: That's my sense of him.

RG: Yeah. Yeah he was a real gentleman. People referred to him as a real gentleman. And ah, I don't know how else to explain it. He was extremely good looking. Ah, hard working person, who I think had the carisma to make people want to do things for him, and with him. You know? Ah, for the hours he put in. I remeber him more hours behind the desk, and on a dictating machine than anything. You know? At home you know he, I come down in the morning on a weekend, and I tell the kids, and he'd come down at 8:30, 9:00. He'd say, how are things at the bank? You know, your bank employee come to work at 9:00 in the morning, he'd already been down there. I mean he was at his dictating machine at 7:00 in the morning, on a weekend.

MN: And you didn't get mad at him that he worked so hard?

RG: Oh no, no, no. We had our good times too. You know? But you don't run your own business, huh?

It's the same now as kids, even young kids working. It's hard to keep ____ (?)

RG: Yeah. I ah, I'm, I'm, dedicated way beyond what I should be for my business, you know I got my fingers all over the whole thing. I don't have a lot of people, but I treat my people the same way that I treat my kids. Everyone that's worked for me, that guy that was just here, went to work for me in 1975, he's a firefighter in the city of Gardner. Okay? He works all his off hours for me. As do two or three others. And ah, you know, I know the names of kids, and I see them, and I, you know, I gotta go to a funeral, the calling hours, the safternoon, the father of a guy that used to work for me. And I wouldn't miss it for the world. And he called me to tell me that his father died before I read it in the paper, I already knew it, but that was his effort. And I really believe in that. And these guys when, when, they, when we go on the road to work someplace, I've got a guy that's on Nantucket right now, he's coming home today. But when I go with these guys, we go out to a nice resturaunt, and we sit, and we talk, you know, company philosophy. How I feel about things, how do they feel about things. I have never ever had anybody come and ask me for a raise. Think that tells you something. I have to be paying

NOT
SURE
who is
speaking

RG: properly. I have to be treating them right. You know? I give them something at Christmas time. I usually give them a gift certificate, I also give them some cash, and a gift certificate so they'll take their wife out to eat. You know? And sometimes they'll do it all together, and sometimes they'll do it individually. And ah, I liked the atmosphere at Heywood Wakefield. I liked it from, from, I was not up in the Board Room all the time. I was down with the workers, more than I was with the Board Room. And I remember, you know, I got taunts thrown at me because I was the President's son, and so forth. I never got any special treatment. People don't realize that. A lot of them do that knew me. People that I worked closely with. Ah, I think would, would tell you that. The ah, I was remembering one time when somebody gave me a bad time because I had a nice car, I mean christ, I had a Ford. But it was a new car. And I said, well wait a minute now. I said ah, you ah, When you get through work today, what are you gonna do? And, I knew what he did. He says, Well, he says, I'm gonna stop at Carbones for a beer, go home and, and I said, well when you go home, you go straight home? He says, no I'm gonna go to Brazzels and get a six pack. And I says, well what are you gonna do then? Well I'm gonna go home and cut the grass, and see what (tape stops for about 10 seconds) So I told him, when the whistle blows, I'm gonna get in my car, and I'm gonna go home, and I'm gonna change my clothes, and ah, cause I used to wear a decent shirt, and pair of pants, and tie, and so forth. Jacket and tie for a long time. And, I'm gonna put my old clothes on, and I'm gonna go out and pick some locks and I'm gonna put a burgular alarm in. And ah, I'm gonna have a fast supper with my, my kids, and I'll be home about 11 o'clock tonight. And I won't watch any television, and I won't go to Brazzels, and I won't go to Carbones, and I won't have anything to drink at all. And tomorrow morning I'll be down here at 7:30, 8:00, or whatever time I'm gonna go to work, and I'm gonna do it all over again. And I'll probably work Saturday. All day. And maybe I'll have one night off, and maybe I'll have Sunday. So I says, Why the hell shouldn't I have more than you? I'm working three times the hours you are. And walked away from him. That was the only thing that really used to gripe me. I put a lot of hours in, and ah, you know. If I live

RG: better for it because I put a lot of hours in. I know, I remember ah, the guy who used to run the paint shop, the superintendant of the paint shop, nice guy. He and Tony Kraskouskas at the package store worked together, at Heywood Wakefield when they were younger. And, this guy walked in, he says, boy Tony, he says, I wished I had gotten out of Heywood Wakefield, he says, look what you got here. He says, this is great. And so forth. Tony's told him the same thing. He says, well Leonard, he says, When you and I worked at Heywood Wakefield, for the most part we worked 40 hours a week. Once in a while a company had a job they had to get out we'd work 45 hours, but it was in the company's best interest, and any company's best interest to work 40 hours because if they were paying 1 and 1 half times what it was worth to do something, it was going to come out of thier profit or raise their cost or whatever. See, so he says I, did took a chance. I says, I can't work more than 40 hours a week for Heywood Wakefield, but I could work more than that for myself. Nobody wants to pay you more than 40 hours a week. Overtimes costly. So I decided that, put my time in the package store. And he says, so I went up to 100 hours a week. And he says, And I still work 75 hours a week, so why the hell shouldn't I have a nice store? And Leonard looked at him and says, geez I guess you're right, and out the door he went. You know? But that's name of the game. Okay?

MN: It's a simple equation. (laughs)

RG: That, yeah! Exactly. That's what I used to tell people that used to bitch, "Well Jesus Christ." And I used to tell people, well you just got a hell of a pay check, you want to trade? Well, maybe not, you know? Cause my paycheck wasn't any spectacular paycheck. I started there at 40 bucks a week when I came out of the service, I think I was making 55. When I went back to work. You know? It wasn't big pay. But it was a great place to work. I enjoyed it I, I told my daughter yesterday wh, what my salary was when I left Heywood Wakefield 12, 13 years ago. She was amazed how, what, you know, there wasn't more than that. I says, no. They never payed a lot of money. They two or three top people were payed quite a lot of money, because that's what you had to pay to get that kind of talent.

RG: I don't care where you went, if you went on the outside, say I want a treasurer, I want a Vice-President, I want a President, you would have to pay that kind of money. But it's dropped off pretty sharp after that. You know? And ah, it's unfortunate, but the, but, see like Simplex, as I started to say, if you want to make a comparison between those two companies, Simplex buys a lot of stuff that gets marked up. Okay? If you're making time clocks and you want to make brass gears, you could punch them out all day long. Brass doesn't carode. It, it, unless you put it in salt water. so you could stack up a year supply of brass gears in the stock room and nothing happens to it. you try that with furniture parts. I was telling Jennifer at ah, William's Restaurant, we went in there last night, and they, they just elevated, made an elevated section on one side and they got like a little pub there. And there's a whole bunch of spindels. And I said, See all those spindels? I said, you got to start out with squares, that you buy from the lumber company. Then they have to be dried, if you don't buy them dry, you gotta dry em. And then you gotta put em in a madison laid, or a backknife laid, and you're gonna turn out spindels by the car load. And maybe after you've done about 500 of em, you got 20 that are no good, so they go down the hog to be ground up to sawdust. The other one's that you've got are gonna go into a sanding machine. They're gonna get sanded, and they're gonna be put in a box. And they're gonna stay there till you're gonna make captain's chairs, or school chairs, or whatever. And it's gonna take 4 of those to a chair. So I said now here's this thing sitting in the stock room, and all of the sudden the humidity goes up or down and the two or three of them split. See? Wood changes all the time. Until you get that put together and finished, it's gone. I can tell ya, where chairs were all done, and all of the sudden something went wrong, and it got sprinkled with water. You don't know that until you put the stain on it, then you've got white spots all over it. Now you've got to sand those off by hand, you gotta do it all over again. By hand. Okay? What the hell did that do to the cost of your chair? I even seen that done deliberately. Stuff that's hanging on the conveyer. Somebody go along and they'd stick water on it.

MN: For what purpose?

RG: Screw up the company. I've seen it. Okay? Not everybody did that. But you get somebody that's ticked off, you know? And ah, I tell you something else, and it's interesting. You know when you have a tree, a dresser. There's a set of legs that sits on and there's a piece of molding that goes around like that. And, and the legs got a little curve in it, and so forth. That's, that's that frame is bolted on or screwed on to the bottom of the case goods dresser. Well you got two short pieces, and one long piece. Alright? I watched, I caught up with a guy who was making these things one leg longer. He had the wrong part. He was putting those things together as fast, as fast as he could. Now he was wrong, and the foreman was wrong. What do you suppose it cost to take all those apart and make em right?

MN: Did he know he was doing it incorrectly?

RG: Hey, who knows? You know? You make it, and you throw it in the pile, and you take the ticket, and that's your piece-work pay. Who knows who, who did that. You know what I'm saying?

MN: Yup. Ah, tomorrow I'm gonna go see Hugo Austin.

RG: Good man. He,

MN: Do you have any suggestions for questions I might ask him?

RG: Hugo ran the costs department. Hugo and his wife, Doris. I'll tell you a funny story off the tape. (tape ends)